

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Extension of Range of Swamp-Hen.—The southern race of the Swamp-Hen, *Porphyrio porphyrio bellus*, has been thought to extend north only as far as Moora (Serventy and Whittell, *Birds of Western Australia*, 1962). On September 7, 1966, I observed a single Swamp-Hen at the Murchison River, half a mile east of the North-West Coastal Highway bridge. The bird was feeding on a small island in the river, among reeds and flood debris which afforded moderately thick cover. I was able to observe it intermittently for about ten minutes from about 40 yards distance, using 8x binoculars in a favourable early morning light, so that specific identification could be made with confidence. At the sub-specific level, it seemed to resemble *P. p. bellus* of the south-west, but I could not identify it with certainty as such, particularly as I am without field experience of *P. p. melanotus* of the north-west.

—L. E. SEDGWICK, South Perth.

Black-and-white Wren(?) on Peron Peninsula.—Edwin Ashby collected an almost black and white specimen of the Black-and-white Wren, *Malurus leuconotus*, on Peron Peninsula, almost indistinguishable from the Black-and-white Wren. *M. leucopterus*, found on Dirk Hartog Island about 30 miles off shore. When visiting the peninsula in September, 1966, I encountered three flocks of *Malurus*, each including a fully plumaged cock. In two cases, one at Hamelin Station at the south end of Hamelin Pool, and one near the outskirts of Denham township, the colouring was typical of *M. leuconotus*. The third bird was seen at Monkey Mia, on the east coast of the peninsula, and 16 miles north-east of Denham. The plumage was decidedly black and white, with no trace of blue apparent at distances down to ten feet in good observing conditions. No specimen was taken so its identity remains uncertain; however, it appears that wrens similar or identical to *M. leucopterus* are maintaining themselves on the mainland, or that the *M. leuconotus* population is being periodically adulterated by *M. leucopterus* vagrants from Dirk Hartog Island.

—L. E. SEDGWICK, South Perth.

Barking Owl at Latham.—In the *W. Aust. Nat.*, 8, 1963; 166; 10, 1965; 8, there are comments on the scarcity of observations of the Barking Owl (*Ninox connivens*) in Western Australia, I wish to record that I have heard the species calling its double-noted barking call on two occasions at Latham.

The first occasion was prior to dawn on August 3, 1961, and though the bird was not seen, it appeared to be in trees some 100 yards east of the Latham railway station. The moon was in the last quarter, but very bright, and the bird called intermittently from the same position for almost half an hour. It then apparently took flight and continued to call while flying, as the calls rapidly diminished in volume and moved southwards. From a new position, perhaps about a quarter of a mile south of the station, it continued to call for a few more minutes as the first light of day emerged.

The second occasion was one evening during the last week in August on a farm, "Rocky Ridge," situated approximately 6 miles N.E. of Latham.

—R. H. STRANGER, West Perth.

Red-tailed Tropic-birds Nesting near Cape Naturaliste.—On January 27, 1967, one of us (T.W.) swam to Sugarloaf Rock, which is about a mile south of Cape Naturaliste. Here he found three Red-tailed Tropic-birds (*Phaethon rubricauda*) sitting on

"nests" while six more birds circled the rock or flew several hundred yards out to sea. The next day the rock was visited by M.T., who found four birds on nests while four others circled in the air above the rock.

We were surprised to notice how forbearing one of the four sitting birds was, for it allowed us to handle it. Each of the others, however, raucously guarded their single egg if the 2 ft. safety limit was encroached on.

The egg of the tame bird was marked with what seemed to be the green juice of the pigface and lay next to the bird in the heat of the sun. The other birds, however, seemed to be taking more care of their eggs.

—TED WATTS, Carmel, and MICHAEL TARBOTTOM, Victoria Park.

[Previous references to the nesting of this species in the Sugarloaf Rock area were made in the *W. Aust. Nat.*, 9: 120 and 171, though the present report is the first of actual nesting on the Sugarloaf itself.—Ed.]

Aboriginal Artefacts at Rottneest Island.—As far as is known Aborigines did not visit Rottneest Island prior to white settlement, but Aboriginal prisoners were held there between 1838 and 1903 and artefacts made by them occur on the island.

In April, 1958, I found a number of bottle-glass spearheads and later collections were made in January, 1959, and Easter, 1963. They were all from one restricted locality and my attention was first attracted by the presence of large quantities of broken glass, from old-fashioned bottles, in concentrations over an area of about half an acre on top, and on the western slopes,

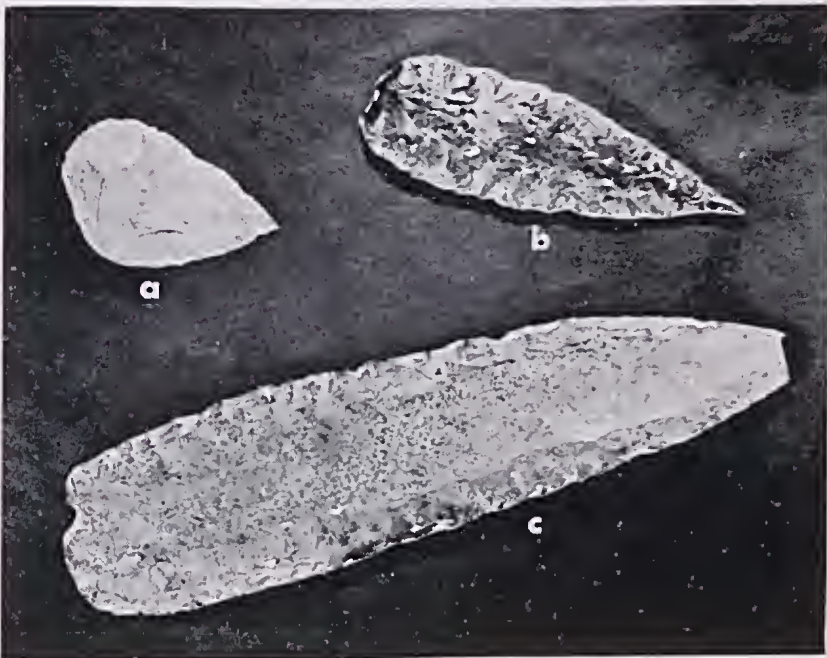


Fig. 1.—a and b, biface points; c, partly completed shovel-nosed spearhead.

—Photo M. Beek.